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Committee on Housing and Land Management

Working Party on Land Administration

Ninth session
Geneva, 26-27 February 2015
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Review of the Programme of Work for 2014 to 2015

Review of the programme of work for 2014 and 2015

Note by the Bureau of the Working Party

Summary

The present note contains information on progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2013/3) of the Working Party on Land Administration and on work to be undertaken throughout 2015. The first three parts of the document are organized according to the clusters of the programme of work; the fourth part describes additional activities and work of the Bureau of the Working Party.

This note also includes those activities of the programme of work 2012-2013 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2011/2) undertaken since the eighth session, which was held on 18 March 2013.

When discussing its activities, the Working Party may wish to keep in mind that the programme should reflect the interests of member States and their willingness to contribute to the programme's implementation in terms of expertise and human and financial resources.

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I. Capacity-building and international knowledge sharing

1. Since the eighth session of the Working Party on Land Administration in March 2013, the Working Party held the following workshops:

- "Land Administration in Central Asia: Building Systems for 21st Century Challenges" in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 19 - 20 March 2013. The workshop addressed challenges and prospects for land administration and cadastre agencies throughout the UNECE region, with a focus on challenges and opportunities related to land management in the countries of Central Asia;
- "Collaborating for secured ownership" in Uppsala, Sweden, 29 - 31 May 2013. The workshop examined how e-governance can give individual landowners better service and allow the administration to serve the society more efficiently;
- "The socioeconomic potential of land administration services," in Copenhagen in May 2014. The workshop explored different aspects of open data in land registration systems and how data interoperability among government agencies could increase citizens' well-being;
- "Real Estate Infrastructure – Fit for Use?" in Vienna October 2014. During the workshop participants shared experiences, presented recent achievements and major challenges in developing real estate infrastructure from a technical, organisational and innovative perspective;
- "Benchmarking of Land Administration Systems and Implementation of Land Governance Assessment Framework in the UNECE Region" in Baku, 28 November 2014. During the workshop the study on the Survey on Land Administration Systems in the ECE Region was presented. It provides an analysis of national land administration systems services, data security and practices for recovering data in the event of a disaster, and other aspects of land administration.

2. In May 2014, the Working Party also organized a meeting of international agencies to explore opportunities for synergy and cooperation in their activities. In addition to the Working Party, the following organizations participated in this meeting: the Council of Geodetic Surveyors, EuroGeographics, the European Land Information Service, the European Land Registry Association, the International Federation of Surveyors, the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union (PCC) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

3. The Working Party organized several sessions during the "Land and poverty conference", hosted by the World Bank in March 2014 in Washington, DC. This included organizing an interregional panel to discuss land administration systems worldwide and a session to discuss the work of the Working Party.

4. The Bureau of the Working Party and the secretariat have also presented the work of the Working Party at various international events focusing on land administration, including:

- "Towards a sustainable real estate market – Real Estate Registration, Investment, Regulation and Capacity Building," organized by the Dubai Real Estate Institute in January 2014 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates;
- "International conference on collateral risk: A historical perspective and German and United States case studies", organized by the private sector and by non-governmental organizations in March 2014 in Berlin. The secretariat made a

presentation on the work of the Working Party and the Real Estate Market Advisory Group;

- "Development of additional functions of property management systems", organized by the Governments of Belarus and Sweden in April 2014 in Minsk;
- "Geospatial World Forum", organized by Geospatial Media and Communications in May 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Working Party organized the workshop "Land as the Basis for Smart City Management" as part of this Forum;
- "Approaches and best practices in urban planning and land administration", organized by the Government of Uzbekistan and the ECE in June 2014 in Tashkent;
- "Plenary meeting of the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union", hosted by the Government of Greece and PCC in June 2014 in Athens;
- "Europe and Central Asia land and e-learning session: Monitoring voluntary guidelines implementation at country level – Voluntary Guidelines Land Governance Assessment Framework information mapping", organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in July 2014. The Chair of the Working Party made a presentation on the work of the Working Party and its connection to the Land Governance Assessment Framework.

5. The Working Party will organize three more workshops in 2015: the first to take place in Geneva in February, the second to take place in Russia in June and the third to take place in Baku in October.

6. The Bureau of the Working Party and the ECE secretariat developed an online wiki[1] to facilitate the sharing of information with the public and between its members. The secretariat has also developed brochures to promote the publications of the Working Party and published a special issue of the newsletter *Vital Spaces*, which focuses on the work of the Working Party.

II. Land-administration reviews

7. The Working Party undertook two land administration reviews in 2013 and 2014, in the Republic of Moldova and in Uzbekistan.

8. The review of land administration and real estate markets in the Republic Moldova was developed by experts from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

9. The review of land management and land administration in Uzbekistan was developed by experts from the United Kingdom.

10. These reviews will be published as chapters in the country profiles on housing and land management of these countries.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management

11. In 2014, the Working Party completed the study "Survey on Land Administration Systems in the ECE Region" (ECE/HBP/180). The study gathered information on countries' land administration systems. This included information on the efficiency of their services,

[1] Available at https://www2.ECE.org/wiki/display/HLMWPLA/Home.

the security of their data and their ability to recover data and services in the event of a disaster.

12. The Working Party completed the study on "Land Registration and Cadastre: One or Two Agencies?" (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/3) which analysed the effects of the merging of land registration and cadastre institutions in the ECE region. The aim of the study was to understand the relationship between organizational structures and the quality of services of land administration organisations.

13. The Working Party completed the study "Informal Development: Challenges and Solutions from South-East Europe" (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/4). This study is expected to be completed in 2015. The study examines the causes of informal housing development in South-East Europe and assesses the Government's policies to address this issue. The study provides recommendations on how member States can address the challenges posed by informal development.

IV. Work of the Bureau of the Working Party

14. Since the last session of the Working Party, held on 18 March 2013, the Bureau met six times in 2013 and nine times in 2014.

15. Each Bureau member was assigned the responsibility to collect data on the land administration systems of the selected countries in the region and to monitor land administration trends.

16. The Bureau has also divided its members into task groups to work on contributing to the programme of work in selected areas. These include:

- Task group one on seminars and workshops
- Task group two on land administration reviews and participation in country profiles on housing and land management
- Task group three on the publication of studies and guidelines on specific land administration and land management topics
- Task group four on the benchmarking and preparation of inventories of land administration systems
- Task group five on cooperation with related national organizations
- Task group six on cooperation with related international organizations and interregional cooperation
- Task group seven on the study "Land Registration and Cadastre: One or Two Agencies?" and its promotion.

Annex

Programme of work for 2014-2015

This programme of work (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2013/3) was approved by the Working Party at its eighth session on 18 March 2013.

I. Capacity-building and international knowledge sharing

1. Objective: To increase the capacity of ECE member State representatives and other stakeholders to formulate policies on land management, land administration, address registers and cadastres.

2. To complete this objective, the Working Party will:

- Organize four workshops in the ECE region to allow for experience and knowledge sharing, to improve he human capital of stakeholders and enhance land management practices.
- Contribute, as requested and available, to ECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group roundtable discussions.
- Present the work of the Working Party and topics in land management at workshops, conferences, seminars and other events focusing on land management.

II. Land-administration reviews

3. Objective: To provide, upon member State request, an assessment of member State land-administration systems and to provide guidelines to enhance these systems.

4. To complete this objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by Governments and subject to the availability of funding, create reviews of member State land-administration reviews as part of the ECE Country Profiles on the Housing Sector.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management and land administration

5. Objective: To study an issue in land management of interest to member States and issue a publication containing an analysis of this issue to help member States better understand the current status of land management and thus formulate more targeted and effective policies.

6. Activity: The Working Party will conduct a study on the structure of land-administration and cadastre agencies to examine the organizational structure of these agencies. The study will provide guidelines and policy recommendations to ECE member States for the organization of these agencies and suggest the conditions under which different organizational structures are advisable.

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Review of the programme of work 2014-2015

Overview of the progress made of a study on land registration and cadastre agencies

Note by the Bureau of the Working Party on Land Administration

Summary

At its eighth session in March 2013, the Working Party approved its programme of work 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2013/3). This programme of work included a study of the organizational structure of land registration and cadastre agencies. Specifically, the Working Party was asked to analyse the effects of the merging of land registration and cadastre institutions. This document presents preliminary research undertaken by ECE on this topic. It is planned that the final publication will be submitted to the Committee for endorsement at the Committee's seventy-sixth session in 2015.

The Working Party on Land Administration is invited to take note of the information provided.

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I. Introduction

1. Land administration is defined by ECE, as "the processes of determining, recording and disseminating information about the ownership, value and use of land when implementing land management policies" (ECE 1996). As a result, in a land administration system, different important data elements can be distinguished: first, an identified piece of land, and second, information such as the ownership, use and value data of that piece of land.

2. Within the ECE region, the way in which data on these elements is collected and managed differs considerably. In some countries, the identification of the land is executed by a separate organisation (often-called cadastre) than the registration of data (often called land registry if it concerns ownership data). In other countries, the two tasks are undertaken by in one organisation.

3. In recent years, a number of countries have merged these two types of organizations; the Working Party is now investigating this phenomenon with the aim to understand if a relationship can be determined between the organizational structure and the quality of services of land administration organisations.

4. The study is being led by the Dutch Kadaster (the Netherlands' land registration and mapping agency) with the support of the Bureau of the Working Party. Thus far, the methods used have included: 1) an analysis of the link between measures of the quality of land administration services and the properties of land administration systems and 2) interviews with representatives of land administration authorities to determine their impressions of the advantages and disadvantages of merging cadastre and land registration functions in one institution. The following sections describe the preliminary results of the study.

II. Comparison between indicators on the quality of land administration services and organizational structures

5. Two studies, which both aim to measure the quality of land administration services, were compared:

(a) The section "Registering property" from the 2013 *Doing Business* report (World Bank 2013) and the associated survey on this section and

(b) The Working Party's *Survey of Land Administration Systems* (ECE/HBP/180)

6. *Doing Business* measures the ease of registering property for all participating countries and publishes a ranking based on this survey. Three elements are measured to determine the ease of registering property: the number of procedures cost and time.

7. *Doing Business* is based on an important quality aspect, ease of registration, but this is not the only quality aspect that is relevant for land registration and cadastre organisations.

8. The *Survey of Land Administration Systems* inventories many land administration quality issues in ECE member States and does not include a ranking. The *Survey of Land Administration Systems* made an inventory of a wide array of quality aspects for land registration and cadastre organisations.

9. To analyse the results of the two surveys, the Working Party compared the *Doing Business* ranking with several organisational and financial aspects of work of land administration agencies examined in the *Survey of Land Administration Systems*. The analysis was looking for answers to the following questions:

- Whether a cadastre or land registry is merged or not. (This is highly correlated with the presence or absence of a civil-court property registration system.)
- The cost of registering property

- The speed of registration
- The percentage of a country's land that is registered.

10. The results of this analysis showed the following. Countries with merged cadastre and land registration organisations rank, on average, 38 out of 189 countries in *Doing Business*. Countries with separate organisations rank, on average, 47. There does not seem to be a strong correlation between ease of registration and the merging of these agencies.

11. The ten least expensive countries for registering property (according to the *Survey of Land Administration Systems*) rank, on average, 23 in *Doing Business*, while the 10 most expensive countries rank, on average, 56 in average. This correlation is to be expected, since the ranking in *Doing Business* is based, in part, on registration costs.

12. The ten countries where it is the fastest to register property (according to the *Survey of Land Administration Systems*) rank, on average, 40 in *Doing Business*, while the 10 slowest rank, on average, 62. Again, this correlation is expected.

13. The countries that report 100 per cent registration coverage rank an average of 44 in *Doing Business*, while the others rank an average of 67.

14. *Doing Business* gives an overview of a wide number of elements that are relevant for doing business and, in that sense, can be thought of as a high-level snapshot of a country's economy.

15. The World Bank report however does not allow a full assessment of the quality of land administration organisations, as on the one hand, it includes elements that are outside the sphere of influence of land administration organisations (like transfer taxes) and, on the other hand, it does not look at certain important quality elements (like completeness of registration). The *Doing Business* report does not show that merged organisations work significantly better than unmerged organisations.

III. Results of interviews with representatives of land-administration agencies

A. Background

16. To better understand discussions on the potential mergers of cadastres and land registers, representatives from cadastre and land registration agencies of ECE member States were requested to write a short description of their opinions related to the unification of cadastres and land registries. These descriptions were used to examine mergers in land administration and the breadth of related actions, beliefs, opinions and arguments. In many cases, the information collected is not directly about a particular merger, but describe the feelings and associations, which the staff have when talking about mergers.

17. Out of the 15 contributions on the unification of cadastres and land registries, from both Western and Eastern European countries, the following issues were reviewed: the situation at the beginning and the context and location in which the system takes place; the external or internal crisis that caused damage; the reaction to the crisis; those who benefited from or were affected by the event; and the situation at the end.

B. The original context of the organizations and possible starting point of mergers

18. Some land registries and cadastres have existed for more than 200 years (usually in Western European countries) while others were established just 10 years ago (usually in newly emerging economies). Hence, the origin of the institutions, the historical paths these institutions have followed and their gradually developed organizational cultures can indeed play a role in the discussions on mergers.

19. In most cases, the starting point for a merger was a statutory law or change arising from the need to regulate to allow the exchange of harmonized data between different computer systems (interoperability). Ireland is one of the exceptions where the merger, in 2012, originated from a strategic public service reform plan for the entire public sector.

20. In those countries where mergers took place, it is acknowledged that while, legally, the organizations are merged, and the merging of operations may take quite some effort and time. Furthermore, a merge between organizations does not automatically imply a merge between databases.

21. Both functions, in cadastres and land administrations are not usually found together, (i.e. already merged). In most cases, land registries and cadastres have been stably maintained separately since their founding. Merger discussions emerged predominantly in the late 1900s.

C. The normative framework in merger discussions

22. The goals in almost all stories are efficiency and modernization. Time is apparently the most important factor against which one has to compare all organizational decisions. If a merger does not improve time efficiency, it is considered a negative decision. Mergers as a result only make sense if they somehow improve efficiency. This makes most other decision criteria inferior. Without improvements in efficiency, one cannot be seen as modernized. Organizations that are perceived to have a positive experience in addressing these factors are predominantly organizations like ECE, the European Union, the World Bank and other countries as exemplary cases.

23. There is a preference for either a more hierarchical structure or clearer operating principles after a merger and stronger coordination and legislation after the alignment of inter-organizational processes.

D. Those who benefited by a merger or other organizational change

24. Most respondents identify clients as the main beneficiaries of changes in organizational structure. They benefit once land-administration organizations prioritize customer service; before the merger or re-organization of activities examined, clients were reported to often suffer from poor services or long processing times.

25. In some occasions, cadastres and registries perceive themselves as being harmed from the merger or the automation of activities, because of increasing dependence on information-technology personnel.

E. The story of mergers – arguments and motivations

26. The majority of stories provide evidence that information technology and changes in the law are the main drivers for change in the interaction between the land registry and the cadastre. Remarkably, it is not the reform of government per se, which is the driver for change, but the consequences of aligning information-technology processes. Therefore, according to most respondents, the main changes are not in organizational structures, but rather changes in processes and coordination of inter-organizational computer systems. Interoperability (i.e. the ability to exchange data having the same structure and meaning) is the end goal and not the merger itself. Hence, interoperability and maintaining or improving service capabilities are considered more crucial than changes in organizational structures.

27. One particularly striking trend is the suggestion that customers are better serviced online, rather than in person, by having some services performed remotely.

28. Another trend is an increase in standardization and reliability. These are perceived as key elements for maintaining trust and legitimacy. Uniformity and legitimacy are also closely associated with being better than other administrative systems and avoiding redundancy or overlap.

29. Additionally, many refer to cost-efficiency as a core value. Apparently, new public management values have influenced land registries and cadastres in all ECE member States. The process of merging can take between 1 and 20 years.

F. Conclusions

30. Most respondent agencies did not foresee major changes in their structure in the near future: i.e. when mergers have taken place, agencies will remain merged; where they have not, agencies are not likely to merge in the future. Most agencies are comfortable with the current structure and extent to which interoperability is being achieved. This tendency to preserve the status quo is strongest in agencies, which have not merged. For agencies where the merger took place, challenges are still perceived ahead.

31. The stories suggest that most agencies are working to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness. In most cases, this modernity is closely associated with the use of information technology (including web services, electronic submission and virtual customer handling) to make processes less expensive and faster. This also implies that organizations can be more neutral and trustworthy by embracing these solutions and that, in turn, customers will also embrace them. However, building quality, customer satisfaction and trust in the service may not imply technology-driven improvements alone, but also more time and attention to customers' individual needs.

32. In most cases, de facto mergers have taken place, in an operational, if not legal, sense. All of the stories suggest an increase in interoperability and operational alignment. Surprisingly, neither the discussions on the United States government's National Spatial Data Infrastructure[1] nor the European Union's INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community)[2] directive seem to be a driving force for change. Neither do reform programmes such as digital or e-governance programmes. Mergers seems to be limited to these two types of organizations or two types of inter-organizational processes and product lines only, and not to the reform of the Government as a whole. All other actors (such as customers, citizens, private sector, professionals) are considered external to the discussion; there is a strong internal focus.

33. The language and comparisons that the authors of the stories use suggest an inclination towards technical and positive comments. Examples of such expressions include the frequent references to "systems" instead of "organizations" or "agencies"; metaphors such as "the centre of gravity of the customer structure"; "customer service at the core of everything we do"; numerical reference referring to size and quantity instead of values, types, priorities or qualities ("coordination between the two departments became bigger and bigger"; "this requires a big reform"; "given the number of problems in land administration"; "the government decided to reduce the number of courts"; "work is done twice"). Issues or problems related to mergers seem to be highlighted only if these are quantified and expressed as part of a ranking system in the survey instead of specifically identifying and classifying the issues.

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[1] Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) (https://www.fgdc.gov/nsdi/nsdi.html)
[2] http://inspire.ec.europa.eu/

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Informal Settlements: Challenges and Opportunities from South-East Europe

Note by the Bureau of the Working Party on Land Administration

Summary

This document contains a summary of conclusions of a draft publication on informal settlements in South-East Europe, prepared jointly by the Working Party and the International Federation of Surveyors.

The draft publication examines the causes of informal housing development in South-East Europe and assesses the Government's policies to address this issue. Its purpose is to develop guidance which would support member States to address the issue of informal development.

It was discussed during the 75th meeting of the Committee of Housing and Land Management in October 2014.

The Working Party is invited to discuss and endorse the draft publication.

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I. Background

1. Informal urban development is not a new issue for Europe. The southern part of the continent has long dealt with this problem. However, over the last 25 years, informal settlements have become an increasingly important and urgent issue in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The United Nations has used the term "informal settlements" to refer to: "i) residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have not legal claim, or which they occupy illegally; ii) unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing)."[1] Similar definitions are used by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development[2] and the World Health Organization.[3]

2. This began in the early 1990s as result of political and economic changes in Eastern Europe and former-Soviet countries coupled with rapid urbanization and uncontrolled, massive internal migration due to poverty, conflicts, marginalization and natural disasters. Informal settlements in the region (including Southern Europe) were further prompted by: a cumbersome permitting process for home improvements and modernization; a misaligned policies by the State and its failure to adopt pro-growth planning; complexities related to the development of modern land policies for the transition from centrally planned to market economies; and the difficulties of state agencies to implement measures in support of economic reforms. These difficulties were also reflected in: delays and confusion in the restitution of rights; inefficient, centrally driven and bureaucratic planning; corruption and a lack of transparency in land management, e.g., in construction permitting and other property related issues; and unfair and unrealistically high property taxation.

3. It is estimated that the annual loss caused by undeclared informal real estate is significant, therefore to address the issue of informal settlements in the ECE region, the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management prepared a report, "Self-Made Cities: In Search of Sustainable Solutions for Informal Settlements (2009)". This publication describes the history of the development of informal settlements in the ECE region and examines the main characteristics of the phenomenon[4]. The current study presented in this document builds on the discussions initiated within the Self-Made Cities report.

II. The study objectives and methodology

4. The study was drafted by the Bureau of the ECE Working Party on Land Administration and the International Federation of Surveyors Task Force on Property and Housing.

5. It examines the causes of informal housing development in five countries of South-East Europe – Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and assesses the government's policies to address the challenge. Based on the

[1]United Nations, "Indicators of sustainable development: Guidelines and methodologies", 2001, available at http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/indisd-mg2001.pdf.

[2]Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, "Glossary of statistical terms: informal settlements, 24 June 2014. Available at http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/

[3]World Health Organization, "People living in informal settlements", 24 June 2014. Available at http://www.who.int/ceh/indicators/informalsettlements.pdf.

[4] http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/SelfMadeCities.pdf

assessment, the study formulates policy recommendations to the governments of these five countries. It also contains lessons learned and best practices that can be applied throughout the UNECE region.

6. The study is based on literature review and interviews. Interviews were conducted with politicians in relevant ministries (such as ministries of finance, environment, planning and agriculture), decision-makers in relevant state authorities (such as land registries, tax authorities and municipal authorities), local experts in the public and private sectors (such as civil engineers, planners and surveyors), the occupants of illegal buildings, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and minorities, real estate agents, contractors and other relevant actors.

7. The full version of this draft publication is available at http://www.unece.org/hlm/landsession9.html.

III. Summary of results

8. The main cause for the development of informal settlements according to the study is inefficient public administration and weak real estate markets and at country level (Table 1 in Annex). When a state cannot ensure efficient provision of affordable housing and does not enable the private sector to do so, people turn to informal solutions when they wish to obtain housing or to improve their housing conditions. Cumbersome regulations for housing construction in Greece, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hinder formal housing construction. Greece also has weak private-property rights due to long-existing policies which promote state-owned land.

9. The following lessons can be learned from the study on informal development in the countries examined in this work:

- A clear and transparent structure of government institutions with roles and responsibilities clearly defined and well-coordinated between each other is necessary to tackle complex issues like informal development;
- Mechanisms should be implemented to legalize all types of properties where the current residents have long-standing tenure of the land;
- Mechanisms should be put in place, not only to legalize existing informal structures, but also to encourage new structures to be built in the formal sector;
- Legalization programmes are most effective when compliance with planning regulations is not a prerequisite for title issuance. The right to own property should not be dependent on the presence of informalities;
- Spatial planning and zoning should be undertaken in a coordinated manner, based on updated cadastral information, to both allow for legalization and discourage further informal development;
- Fees and penalties for legalization should be kept affordable, in terms of time and money, for all, including the poor and middle-class;
- Overly strict and expensive formalization procedures can severely limit the real estate market's ability to function;
- Formalization laws should be formulated and enforced in a way that protects the environment, encourages secure tenure and promotes economic growth;

- Property laws must be clear, and the Government should not, in most cases, retroactively enforce ownership rights over land that has been in the private property for an extended period of time;
- The private sector can contribute to surveying and quality control for legalization, but it must be regulated and its role must be clearly defined;
- Policies should encourage the proper training of all relevant experts;
- Planning amnesty programmes can be useful measures to bring large amounts of informal properties into the formal sector';
- Informal settlement's households need to be made aware of the advantages of legalization and the necessary procedures to legalize their property;
- The active involvement of informal settlement's households in the legalization process should be encouraged;
- Informal settlement's households must believe in the long-term viability of a formalization project in order to successfully participate in it;
- Affordable, legal housing should be available to reduce the demand for informal development;
- In natural-hazard-prone areas, controls to prevent degradation of the environment are necessary. This requires a professional, ethical system to ensure the enforcement of standards;
- Permitting procedures for any kind of further improvements of legalized properties should be simple, fast and affordable;
- Policies to discourage future informal development are just as important as policies to legalize current informal development. This includes well-made policy for construction permitting and regulation;
- A lack of social or affordable housing can exacerbate the problem of informal development;
- Strong state programmes for social housing lead to fewer slums and dilapidated social housing.

10. The first priority for the national economy of each country should be to develop real estate markets and strengthen private property rights. This could be done by:

- Decreasing or waiving associated with the legalization of properties;
- The simplification of planning regulations for owners who want to legalize their properties, in order for them to be in compliance; and
- Simplifying requirements for a survey of the existing informal construction, e.g., proposing a standardized delineation on orthophotos together with basic information about the total area and number of floors of the construction which may be sufficient for legalization.

11. In the near future, it may be proposed that countries agree on International Property Measurement Standards for the various types of real estate to better serve the markets and allow for credit, so that improved constructions can then be documented accordingly.

12. Planning and all other environmental and safety controls and improvements should follow property registration; all properties should be allowed to be mortgaged and transferred regardless their condition. Only then will the occupants of informal real estate

be able to obtain credit and proceed with the necessary improvements. Such improvements may be made by the new owner in case of sale.

13. There is also a need for flexible and pro-growth improvements to the existing planning, building permitting and zoning systems; mechanisms and plans for affordable housing and municipal financing provision for infrastructure improvements should be developed as well. It is therefore preferable that legislation not include any deadlines for legalization until parallel measures are adopted, such as flexible, pro-growth planning and construction permitting and the provision of affordable housing mechanisms. The contribution of the private sector is important but its role should be defined by clear rules.

Annex

Table 1
Identified causes of informal development

	Albania	*Cyprus*	*Greece*	*Montenegro*	*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*
Migration/urbanization	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Centrally controlled/ bureaucratic planning	no	no	yes	yes	yes (now improving)
Ecological or other constitutional concerns about development	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Inadequate housing policy	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Refugees/displaced persons	no	no	no	yes	yes
Policies regarding Roma and other minorities	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Unclear property rights	yes	no	yes (in zones bordering forests)	yes	yes
Inefficient property registration/planning systems	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Costly/complicated construction permitting	no	no	yes	yes	no
Poverty	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Insufficient housing provided by the real estate market	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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Working Party on Land Administration

Ninth session
Geneva, 26-27 February 2015
Item 8 of the provisional agenda
Presentation of the Programme of work for 2016 to 2017

Draft programme of work for 2016-2017

Note by the Bureau of the Working Party

Summary

This note contains a proposed programme of work for the Working Party on Land Administration for the years 2016 and 2017.

When discussing its activities, the Working Party may wish to keep in mind that the programme should reflect the interest of member States and their willingness to contribute to the programme's implementation in terms of expertise and human and financial resources.

The Working Party is invited to review and approve the programme of work.

GE.15-00799 (E)

1500799

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I. Capacity-building and international knowledge sharing

1. Objective: To increase the capacity of UNECE member States to formulate policies on land administration and management.

2. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:

- Organize four workshops in the UNECE region to allow for experience and knowledge sharing, to improve the human capital of stakeholders and enhance land management practices
- Contribute, as requested and available, to UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group roundtable discussions
- Present the work of the Working Party and provide advice on land management at workshops, conferences, seminars and other events focusing on land management.

II. Land administration reviews

3. Objective: To provide, upon the request of a member State, an assessment of member State land administration systems and guidelines to enhance these systems.

4. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by Governments and subject to the availability of funding, develop member State land administration reviews as part of the UNECE country profiles on housing and land management.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management

5. Objective: To study issues in land management of interest to member States and develop publications containing analyses of this issue to help member States better understand the current status of land management and thus formulate more targeted and effective policies.

6. Activity: The Working Party in cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management will conduct a study on the elaboration of Smart City Indicators (ECE/HBP/179, para 48). The study is part of the UNECE's project "United Smart Cities: Smart urban solutions for transition and developing countries".[1]

7. Activity: The Working Party will organize the dissemination of conclusions and recommendations of the study "Informal Settlements: Challenges and Opportunities from South-East Europe" and will use the study methodology to review the situation of informal settlements in other member States in the UNECE region.

8. Activity: The Working Party in cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management will conduct a study on "Cities and human settlements in coastal areas: preventing and mitigating the risks of impacts of natural and human induced disasters". The Working Party will elaborate a classification system for cities in coastal zones as well as identify management options aimed at preventing or mitigating the risks of impacts in cities in coastal areas.

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[1] Please see the report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its 75th session, paras 46 - 48, at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2014/ECE_HBP_179.en.pdf

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ECE Coastal Cities Initiative: for resilient human settlements in coastal areas in the ECE Region

Note by the secretariat

Summary

To support the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE region for the period 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2012/3), the secretariat has elaborated this proposal for the preparation of a study on the classification of coastal areas and the development of policy advice and guidance for cities in the coastal areas in the ECE region.

The Working Party is invited to discuss and endorse this proposal.

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I. Background

1. According to the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region 2014-2020[1] adopted by the ECE Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management in October 2013, by the year 2020, member States *should develop territorial plans and/or other instruments to enforce planning regulations for areas in human settlements prone to natural and human generated disasters, attractive for private investments, ecologically sensitive and heritage sites.*

2. Cities and human settlements in coastal areas are the most affected by *natural and human generated disasters* while are also *attractive for private investments,* and often located *in ecologically sensitive areas.* Generally coasts are more densely populated compared to in-land areas due to the many key economic activities taking place in coastal areas, including marine transport, shipping of goods, fishing, recreation, tourism, offshore gas and oil drilling. Coastal areas are also home to species and habitats that provide many benefits to the society but might often be threatened. Coastal areas biomes are rich in biodiversity but at the same time extremely vulnerable.

3. Natural disasters and climate change affect the environment as well as human settlements in coastal areas in a variety of ways. Coasts are prone to sea level rise, storms and other severe weather events, which increasingly result in floods and coastal erosion. Estimates of future sea level rise vary for different regions, but global sea level for the next century is expected to rise at a greater rate than during the past fifty years.[2] This means that the challenges of the coastal zones erosion and inundation will become in the future even more acute.[3] In addition, rising atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO2) are causing the oceans to absorb more of the gas and become more acidic. This rising acidity could have significant impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems.[4]

4. In the UNECE region, 31 of the 56 member States have sea coastlines. In the United States, 23 of the 25 most densely populated states are located along the coasts. Capital cities of Denmark, Norway, UK, are coastal cities. A list of UNECE member States with the information on the length of their sea coastlines and major cities in coastal areas is available in Annex 1 to this document.

5. The need for urgent action by governments to make human settlements more resilient to extreme weather events, including those caused by climate change, is underlined by the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing[5] and is part of the proposed UN Sustainable Development Goals.[6]

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[1] http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/sust.hsng.strategy.pdf, p. 5

[2] Nicholls, R.J., at al. (2007). Coastal systems and low-lying areas. In: Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom

[3] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2012). Summary for Policymakers. In: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, pp. 1-19.

[4] Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research (2009). Coastal Sensitivity to Sea-Level Rise: A Focus on the Mid-Atlantic Region. US Environmental Protection Agency EPA, Washington, D.C., USA

[5] http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37235&L=0

[6] http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html

II. Proposed objectives and activities of the study

6. The proposed study will support the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region and the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing by developing a classification system of coastal areas and providing guidance to the ECE member States for increasing resilience of cities and human settlements in coastal areas.

7. The proposed Coastal Cities Initiative for the ECE Region will include the following activities:

(a) Establishment of an expert group for the preparation of the study;

(b) Elaboration of a classification system for coastal areas;

(c) Development of a classification of coastal areas in the ECE region and preparation of the study report;

(d) Preparation of maps with the classification of coastal areas for the ECE region;

(e) Pilot activities for testing the classification system for at least 10 cities in the ECE region;

(f) Development of guidelines for ECE coastal cities including best practices;

(g) A series of capacity building activities, aimed at facilitating exchange of best practices and building capacities of national and local authorities for reducing vulnerabilities and increasing urban resilience of the coastal cities.

III. Proposed methodological approaches

8. It is proposed to use the Coastal Hazard Wheel (CHW) system developed for multi-hazard assessment of coastal areas (Rosendahl Appelquist 2012, 2014)[7] as a starting point for the development of the methodology of the classification of coastal cities and human settlements. This coastal classification system is based on the bio-geophysical components that are considered most important for the characteristics of coastal areas. The components included are geological layout, wave exposure, tidal range, flora/fauna, sediment balance and storm climate, and each generic coastal environment has a specific combination of these variables.

9. However, the mentioned methodology is not sufficient to develop policy advice to the cities and human settlements where the risks of exposure also depend on the economic and social potential of cities, existing planning and infrastructure. Therefore, in addition to the natural environment indicators as proposed in the methodology by Rosendahl Appelquist, indicators characterising risks to the built environment and infrastructure, economic and social development; shall be added to complete the methodology for the ECE Coastal Cities Initiative. These can be based on other relevant literature and initiatives, as well as work already undertaken in this area by ECE.

[7] Rosendahl Appelquist, L., Halsnæs, K. 2014. The Coastal Hazard Wheel system for coastal multi-hazard assessment and management in a changing climate. Submitted to *Journal of Coastal Conservation.* Rosendahl Appelquist, L. 2012. Generic framework for meso-scale assessment of climate change hazards in coastal environments, Journal of Coastal Conservation.

IV. Proposal for the organization of work on the policy brief

10. The proposed initiative is to be implemented through the establishment of an expert group, which will be open to the participation of partner organizations and experts. Among possible partner organizations to be invited to cooperate are: UN-Habitat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the European Commission, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG, European Environment Agency, NOAA Office for Coastal Management (USA), the International Society of City and Regional Planners; as well as universities, think-tanks (NGOs and consultancy organizations which have expertise on this topic); and individual experts.

11. A wide consultation on the preparation of the study will be organized with ECE Divisions, including Environment, Sustainable Energy, Transport and Trade and Economic Cooperation.

12. The Working Party is invited to discuss, provide input and endorse this proposal.

Annex

UNECE member States by length of their sea coastlines and major cities in coastal areas[8]

No.	*Country*	*Coastlines in km*	*Major coastal cities*
1	Canada	202,080	Vancouver, Halifax, Moncton
2	Russian Federation	37,653	St. Petersburg, Vladivostok
3	Norway	25,148	Oslo, Bergen, Kragerø, Kristiansand
4	United States of America	19,924	Boston, NYC, New Orleans, Seattle
5	Greece	13,676	Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklion
6	United Kingdom	12,429	London, Edinburgh, Plymouth
7	Italy	7,600	Venice, Naples, Palermo
8	Denmark	7,314	Copenhagen, Aarhus, Esbjerg
9	Croatia	5,835	Rijeka, Zadar, Dubrovnik
10	Iceland	4,970	Reykjavik, Hafnarfjörður
11	Spain	4,964	Barcelona, Bilbao, Vigo
12	France	4,853	Marseille, Nice, La Rochelle
13	Estonia	3,794	Tallinn, Parnu
14	Sweden	3,218	Malmo, Gothenburg, Stockholm
15	Germany	2,389	Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven, Stralsund
16	Portugal	1,793	Porto, Lisbon, Setubal
17	Ireland	1,448	Dublin, Galway, Waterford
18	Finland	1,250	Helsinki, Turku, Kotka
19	Cyprus	648	Larnaca, Limassol
20	Latvia	531	Riga, Liepāja
21	Netherlands	451	Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Hoorn
22	Poland	440	Gdansk, Gdynia, Kolobrzeg
23	Albania	362	Durres, Vlore
24	Israel	273*	Tel Aviv, Haifa
25	Montenegro	199	Budva, Herceg Novi, Bar
26	Malta	197	Valetta, St. Paul's bay, Marsakala
27	Lithuania	99	Klaipeda, Palanga, Nida
28	Belgium	66	Antwerp, Dunkirk, Ostend
29	Slovenia	47	Koper, Izola
30	Bosnia and Herzegovina	20	Neum
31	Monaco	4	Monaco
*Including Gaza Strip			

[8] Source: Developed by the UNECE secretarial based on the data in the CIA World Factbook and http://world.bymap.org/Coastlines.html